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## A Talk With James Wyngaarden

### The Road to NIH's Record-Setting Budget for 1985

*The National Institutes of Health is coming out of the 98th Congress with a record-setting budget, somewhere between the \$4.8 billion voted by the House and \$5.1 billion by the Senate. At the least, that's \$358 million above the current budget—a plump increase over the \$90-million rise requested by the Administration. SGR discussed the budget and other matters September 5 with NIH Director James B. Wyngaarden. Following is the text, edited by SGR for brevity and clarity:*

*SGR. You had a good season in Congress—about a half billion over the President's request for NIH. Were you up there pounding the corridors?*

Wyngaarden. No, not really pounding the corridors. We had interesting hearings on the Hill this year. I published a paper early in the year in *Science* ["Preserving the Scientific Enterprise," January 22, 1984, which suggested that NIH's then \$4-billion budget should rise to \$8 billion by 1990.] The Office of Management and Budget wasn't very happy about that.

*SGR. What did they do?*

Wyngaarden. They asked for copies of all talks I had given since I became Director [in April 1982]. So, we

### New NSF Director Lists Problems and Goals—Page 2

sent them about 125 manuscripts. And I haven't heard from them since. But at the same time, the Administration's projection for NIH was for a two percent increase per year to 1990. In both the House and Senate, the first questions I got after my prepared statement had to do with the disparity between my projections and the Administration's. In the end, the committees also responded to a lot of citizen-witnesses. There was the alternative budget that was prepared by the Coalition for Health Funding—120 or so societies signed on to that. And other groups offered alternative budgets, too.

*SGR. Does the Department [of Health and Human Services] require clearance of policy speeches and budget discussions, like your Science paper?*

Wyngaarden. No, they really haven't.

*SGR. Is Bethesda autonomous in that respect?*

Wyngaarden. No, I think there are probably limits. This one was a little beyond the usual limits. I don't know if I could do that too often.

*SGR. The figure you were projecting is a bit grandiose in an Administration that's says it's committed to restraining spending.*

Wyngaarden. It really was in the same range [of about 12 percent] as the Administration projections for the National Science Foundation or for R&D in the Defense Department. I know that [Presidential Science Adviser] "Jay" Keyworth was hoping that the Administration's proposal would be in that same range for biomedical science. But, for whatever reasons, the Administration's request for the NIH over the last 10-15 years has been pretty modest, and Congress has added to that every year. I suspect that that's factored into the strategy. I did a little checking on the figures. The average [Administration] request [for increases] for the NIH for the past 12 years or so has been about 2.7 percent. The average budget actually voted was about 8.7 percent.

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### In Brief

Defense Secretary Weinberger has directed the military services to plan an acceleration of their spending on basic research, about half of which goes to universities. Following complaints from White House Science Adviser George A. Keyworth about the slow rate of growth in DoD science spending, Weinberger directed the Army, Navy, and Air Force to aim for 8 percent real growth starting in fiscal 1987. The present plan, calling for 7-percent growth, has had little effect. With a current budget of \$850 million in the basic research category (known as 6.1 money in DoD parlance) only a \$50 million increase was sought, and obtained, for next year.

*The word around NIH is that Lester B. Salans is coming back, just a few months after he resigned as Director of the National Institute of Arthritis, Diabetes, and Digestive and Kidney Diseases to become Dean of the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, in New York. In response to an inquiry from SGR, Salans said discussion of his plans is "premature." A search committee is still looking to fill his old NIH post, which he had held for two years when he left June 30.*

A job at Boeing as Vice President for Technology Assessment is taking Edith W. Martin out of the Pentagon, where she was responsible, among other things, for soothing academic fears about scientific security restrictions. Martin, Deputy Under Secretary for Research and Advanced Technology, was publicly embarrassed last April when her boss, Under Secretary Richard D. DeLauer, ridiculed plans she had helped devise for restricting circulation of "sensitive" research data on campus.

## New Director Lists Problems and Goals for NSF

Erich Bloch, the new Director of the National Science Foundation, says he has no marching orders from the Administration, and that he's not planning any major reordering of NSF's priorities or even the internal reorganization that's customary for new chiefs at the Foundation.

Meeting with Washington science writers September 6 for an hour-long get-acquainted session, Bloch, fresh from 33 years with IBM, referred to news accounts highlighting that he's the first NSF Director to come from an industrial or engineering background. He discounted what he referred to as scientists' "concerns that I will focus all my attention on engineering," or possible fears among engineers that "I will lean over backwards to favor science."

But he said that NSF's current support of engineering—about 10 percent of the \$1.5-billion budget, by some reckonings—is "less than adequate." Engineering is "underfunded in academia," he said. The allocation within NSF's budget "will not go to 50-50," he said, but he added that he favors "more than what exists today" for engineering. Science and engineering, he said, are "interdependent. Engineering lives off science, but there is a backflow to science."

In harmony with the Administration that appointed him, Bloch shied away from anything resembling Democratic proposals for a broadscale federal role in industrial technology.

Bloch described a number of "problems and goals" that he said will guide him as Director. Starting with the problems, he listed them as follows:

- The increasing complexity and rapid rate of change in science and engineering. "The things we are getting into are more complex," he said, adding that as a result, the "focus on basic research in science and engineering is more important than ever."

- International competition in high-technology products. The US is ahead of its competitors, he said, "but the gap is narrowing."

- The current changes in relations between industry, academe, and government. "They are all interdependent," he said, but the groundrules for their relationship are still evolving and often are unclear.

As for what he described as goals, Bloch listed the following:

- "Excellence" in NSF's awards for grants and contracts, best achieved, he said, through reliance on peer review. He also said he aims for excellence in NSF's staff operations, but said he felt the agency had had enough reorganizing in recent years and now could benefit from "continuity" rather than "being shuffled around like a deck of cards."

- A "strategic view of science and engineering," to be used as a "daily working tool" in making priorities. Since funds are insufficient for doing everything that's deemed desirable, he said, spending decisions should be guided by a sense of the relative importance among choices.

- Furthering productive relations between industry, academe, and government. Bloch said he is, of course, well-acquainted with the industrial sector, and is also quite familiar with academe as former Chairman of the Semiconductor Research Cooperative, an industrial consortium that finances research in universities. In addition, for his last three years at IBM, he was Vice President for Technical Personnel Development, a post that involved many contacts with academe.

- Frequent assessment of the "impact and value" of ongoing programs, which is necessary, Bloch said, "because it's easy to start something but difficult to cut it off." In connection with that, he said, he's directed the NSF staff to organize the budget in terms of the "base" and new initiatives. The process calls for listing priorities within the base, Bloch said, so that projects of lesser importance can be scuttled to free funds for new activities.

Bloch was noncommittal about the social sciences, whose practitioners claim neglect by NSF. NSF, he said, has a "mandate to support" social science research. "I'm looking at it," he continued, but "have made no conclusions."

As for the frail state of Soviet-American scientific relations, the new Director said, "We need to know what they're doing, and the best way is to talk to them."

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## ... A Role for OSTP in Biomedical Research Policy?

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The increase in [fiscal] '83, which was 9.9 percent, and '84, which was about 10.6 percent, brought us almost back to where we were in '79 in purchasing power—maybe one percent less. If the '85 budget is passed, as the House and Senate have passed it, it will be an all-time high for the NIH, in constant and in current dollars.

### "Ball in OSTP's Court"

*SGR. Keyworth has said that he wants the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to get more involved in NIH affairs. Is that happening?*

Wyngaarden. One of the things he hopes to accomplish is a little closer liaison in budget planning. Now, there's a little delicacy there. The statute which established OSTP clearly includes in the wording the opportunity to work with agencies in the development of budgets. From our point of view, it's a little delicate, because our usual reporting sequence is through the Department [of Health and Human Services.] And there's some disagreement in the Department as to how much we should get involved with OSTP, but we're just playing it responsibly.

*SGR. What's that mean?*

Wyngaarden. I think the ball is in OSTP's court. The [statutory] language gives them the opportunity to work with the agencies. I don't know that it gives us the opportunity to work with them directly.

*SGR. Does OSTP come here and say, "How's your budget planning coming along?"*

Wyngaarden. Dr. [Bernardine] Bulkley [an OSTP Deputy Director, appointed last year to handle biomedical and related issues] has begun to make some contacts here, and I've talked to her a few times. I know they do want to get involved in the next [budget] cycle.

*SGR. At the Department or at NIH?*

Wyngaarden. At NIH.

*SGR. What's on their minds when they come out here?*

Wyngaarden. I'm not sure yet. My sense of this is that Jay would like to see NIH and NSF treated perhaps somewhat in parallel. And would like to have more chance to influence the OMB attitude toward the NIH budget. The system works, but in the end, it seems to me that the Administration is not taking advantage of the opportunity to set biomedical-science policy, to the extent that it might. Instead, that has been given over to the Congress in the past decade, or perhaps longer. Each year, the Congress adds to the NIH budget in the areas it considers to be important.

*SGR. Keyworth has said that he would like to see NIH more involved in biotechnology, particularly in training people who then go into industry. Is that in line with your*

*plans here?*

Wyngaarden. I've talked with Bernardine [Bulkley] about that, and I plan to talk with Jay in the near future. It's possible that we could do that, but it seems to be just a little tangential from our legislative charge, which is to conduct research and training necessary in the performance of that research. I would have to find out just what's on Jay's mind in that respect. Training that's established with the primary objective of producing manpower for industry independent of our research projects would have to be carefully explored.

### NIH Spared Major Changes

*SGR. Since the Reagan Administration took office, many of the national labs, particularly in agriculture and energy, have been scaled down in staff and have been given new priorities. Have similar changes been taking place here?*

Wyngaarden. I don't think there's any example of any reshaping of that sort. We've had some revision of priorities, in response to developments like AIDS. One of the things that Mrs. [Margaret] Heckler [Secretary of Health and Human Services] accomplished was the supplemental budget for AIDS research. I think that involved overcoming a certain amount of resistance initially, but she did manage to persuade OMB or the White House that this was necessary. So, to that extent, there was a little reshaping. We're feeling the pinch in the reduction of FTEs [fulltime equivalent employes]. I understand that there's a desire to cut down the size of government in virtually all departments other than Defense, and the Secretary's office has participated in that. We have a certain number of FTEs by which we're supposed to reduce our forces. That's for the next fiscal year. We have been held very tightly to our present level this year, and had to put on a hiring freeze to achieve that. We are also looking at ways to contract out certain functions, but I wouldn't characterize that as a massive reshaping; it's just minor trimmings of the size of the place.

### Indirect Costs

*SGR. When you became Director, you publicly expressed concern about the growing proportion of NIH funds going into indirect costs. But lately you've not taken up that subject.*

Wyngaarden. That was one of those freebies that came with the job. I didn't participate in the initial decision [to pay only 90 percent of indirect costs]. By the time I got here, that decision had been incorporated in the President's budget. So, all of us had to defend that

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## ... Booming Cancer Budget Held Back Other Fields

(Continued from page 3)

decision and did for the two years it was in the budget. Congress put the money back twice, and for the third year, the present year, the Administration agreed about putting the reduction back in. Besides, by this time, we've asked for a study of indirect costs by OSTP, and the General Accounting Office has reported on the subject. So, there was a convergence of thought about where the problems might lie. Also, a sense that the government ought to be dealing in an across-the-board manner on indirect costs. So, I was happy with that decision. It was a no-win situation for us.

### "Scientists Cheering Us On"

*SGR. Your academic constituents were getting very agitated, weren't they—the Association of American Medical Colleges and the Association of American Universities?*

Wyngaarden. Those representing [university] administrations really were, yes. But the scientists were cheering us on. And some of the administrators were, too. I have a certain number of letters in the files from deans who thought we were on target. But the issue is now quiescent, as far as we're concerned.

*SGR. You've been against a setting up a separate Arthritis Institute, but Congress seems to like the idea.*

Wyngaarden. It is in Senate and House bills, but the bills are very different, and we don't know if they'll harmonize them. The guessing in the Department a few weeks ago was that there's a 50-50 chance it wouldn't get acted on in the remaining days of Congress. My point is that we don't accomplish anything just by creating an Arthritis Institute, even if Congress were to add an additional \$4 million or so for the added administrative costs. If it's determined that we should make a major effort in arthritis, that this is the next great thrust, we should learn from the experience with the cancer field.

In the early '70s, when there was a great move to do something about cancer—the cancer, heart disease, stroke initiative—the budget of the Cancer Institute was doubled, and Heart went up about 25 percent. Neurology stayed about level and most others went down for the next seven years before they came back to baseline in purchasing power.

So, without a substantial increase in the total NIH budget, there was a substantial shift in allocation within that budget. And that did several things. It sent a powerful message to the research community, and many scientists began to shift their research toward the cancer field. Some excellent people did that, well-established scientists. In addition, it brought a new generation of young scientists who chose the cancer field as a place where they could get good support. And it really did transform the work force in cancer science. Cancer al-

ways had some exceptional people in it, but on average it wasn't getting the very best people until the early '70s, and since then it has gotten spectacular people.

*SGR. Was this to the detriment of other fields of research?*

Wyngaarden. I think so. I think the shift of that much money into cancer was very good for cancer, but it represented a cutback in many other fields. If we want to do something like that in the arthritis field, it seems to me the way to do it is to double the arthritis budget; then it doesn't matter whether it's a new institute or not. But just making a new institute isn't of itself going to mean much.

### Payoff from Cancer Research

*SGR. Has the payoff from cancer research been commensurate with the investment?*

Wyngaarden. I think it's probably early to say, but the scientific excitement of the cancer field is really incredible. The discoveries of virus involvement in cancer, the oncogene story, the gene enhancers. We're developing insights into cancer biology that are extraordinarily promising. At the same we're continuing to rely on what Lew Thomas would call "half-way technologies," for the most part, in the treatment of cancer. The ultimate goal is clearly prevention. And until we can achieve adequate progress in prevention, we rely on surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy, and various combinations. But the results of the approaches over the last 20-25 years are extremely encouraging.

I'm very interested in the new cancer-prevention programs that have come out of worldwide epidemiological studies that correlate high and low cancer incidences with various environmental factors. And out of that has come some strong clues about dietary involvement that we're just beginning to study. Dr. [Vincent] DeVita [Director of the National Cancer Institute] estimates that it will probably take ten years before answers are in on those. Maybe we'll see trends before that.

### Political Appointments?

*SGR. There have been complaints about the appointments that Administration has been making to the National Cancer Advisory Board [which is presidentially appointed]—too many clinicians and not enough scientists.*

Wyngaarden. I understand that the last group of appointees brought them back into pretty good balance.

*SGR. Have you felt any pressure from the Administration on appointments to NIH's many committees and boards?*

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## ... Congressional Support "Comes with Strings"

(Continued from page 4)

Wyngaarden. We have pretty complete freedom in the appointments at the initial review level. These are made for scientific expertise in very precise areas. Those have been made at the NIH level from the beginning. At the Council level and certain other advisory committees, nominations arise from many sources. We frequently will submit a slate and the Secretary's office may have suggestions that come in. We have usually had a chance to comment on the people that they are raising as possible appointees. Some of them turn out to be perfectly well qualified people for the positions they're proposed for. Sometimes their expertise is in a different area, and we have a chance to suggest that this isn't the right one for this position. It has worked out pretty well.

*SGR. Elsewhere we've seen the Administration putting its ideologues on advisory bodies. Have you encountered that here?*

Wyngaarden. I think if I really searched, I could come up with one or two examples of people who might be in that category. I think more frequently the person suggested for a given position may, on paper, seem qualified: a physician for a physician's position. But when one looks at the precise qualifications of that person, they may not fit the task. In that case, usually, they have not pressed the appointment. On the Cancer Board—I can't speak to that as much, because it is part of NIH and it isn't. The root there is different. The appointments don't come through this office.

### Planning Next Budget

*SGR. Looking to the '86 budget that's now in preparation, are you planning anything special?*

Wyngaarden. That's what we hope to develop with this new liaison with OSTP. Or to put it another way, that's what OSTP hopes it can develop in its liaison with us. We have in every budget submission certain initiatives that we think would be important. But it's difficult to stop doing certain things in favor of new ones. We do a little bit of that every year, but major pushes generally require additional funds because of the commitments that carry forward. For the most part, those haven't survived the budget cutting.

This matter of OSTP working with the agencies on budgets is something that hasn't been done before. And I don't know how it will sort out. It could be useful, but it's not welcomed at the Department level.

*SGR. Why useful? NIH knows how to formulate its own programs and budgets, and its friends in Congress put them through. Why do you want to get the White House into the act, when it's been mostly kept out for all of NIH's history?*

Wyngaarden. We've gotten strong support from the Congress and the extramural community. But, as I said

earlier, I think that's factored into the strategy—the Administration doesn't request too much for us because they know that Congress is going to add it. But, at the same, that strategy means that the Administration gives away certain prerogatives in formulating policy. That's Jay's concern and it's mine also. The present pattern of operation has been good for protecting NIH's budget and developing it. But it comes with strings.

*SGR. Like the unwanted Arthritis Institute?*

Wyngaarden. For example. And when the Congress adds money, they usually do it for fairly specific purposes. About 25 percent of our total budget now is earmarked for specific areas, fields, programs, centers, so on. A lot of it we would be doing anyway, but the flexibility diminishes each year that happens. In some areas, it might be preferable to have the Administration take the lead. I've taken the point of view, personally, that the greatest power of the scientific system lies in the collective initiatives of the individual scientists, and I'm personally disposed to direct science little from this end, but to make the resources available. About 50-55 percent of all of our resources are in these investigator-initiated research project grants. That's substantially up from a few years back. We have not proposed quite as many new starts in clinical trials—some, but not as many in the past—because of budgetary restrictions. But Congress tends to add those back because those are highly visible areas that they like to support. So, I think the priorities for NIH are set in multiple ways, some by planning at this end, some by planning in Congress through the intervention of citizens groups.

*SGR. The White House Science office is now peripheral. Bringing a new player into the game opens the way for uncertainties.*

Wyngaarden. That's right. I don't know how to predict their role.

### Money for Construction

*SGR. There have been many requests in universities for the resumption of money for buildings.*

Wyngaarden. Congress is interested in it, and asked more questions about facilities in this last round [of hearings] than they had for some years. And this includes facilities at NIH, where a new building for child health fell victim to the revision under President Carter. So that has never been constructed. We also have plans for a consolidated office building. We have about 2500 people, largely in grants management but also some epidemiological research people, in rented space. We'd like to bring them back to the campus.

In the extramural world, there are facilities needs in at least three categories. I took some very informal soundings about two years ago. One area where many

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## In Print: CBW Sensors, Space, Innovation, Etc.

*Assessment of Chemical and Biological Sensor Technologies.* Report prepared for the US Army by the Board on Army Science and Technology of the National Academy of Sciences, concludes that Army equipment for detecting and identifying hostile chemical and biological agents is both scarce and backward, and that the "tactics and doctrine for operations on a contaminated battlefield and for defending against chemical agents are in an immature state"; recommends that the Army expand its defensive R&D activities in this field, including the development of "realistic, nontoxic simulants for both field testing and training."

(110 pages, no charge, NAS, Board on Army Science and Technology, 2101 Constitution Ave. Nw., Washington, DC 20418.)

*International Cooperation and Competition in Civilian Space Activities,* summary of a forthcoming report by the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, warns that the US faces more competition than it seems to realize in commercial exploitation of space, and that it is "less and less appropriate to make 'space policy' in isolation from the broader agenda of domestic and international commerce and foreign affairs."

(The summary, 33 pages, is available without charge from Office of Technology Assessment, Publishing Of-

fice, 600 Pennsylvania Ave. Se., Washington, DC 20003; the full report will be available this fall from the US Government Printing Office.)

*Technology, Innovation, and Regional Economic Development,* another OTA report, cautions that the record is often unclear or contradictory about effective recipes for promoting the growth of high-tech industries, and expresses reservations about federal programs specifically aimed at that goal.

(167 pages, \$5.50, Superintendent of Documents, USGPO, Washington, DC 20402; specify Stock No. 052-003-00959-5.)

*Academic Science/Engineering: Graduate Enrollment and Support, Fall 1982,* based on NSF's 11th annual survey of graduate science and engineering students and postdoctorates, provides figures on enrollments at 614 institutions, by subject, race, source of financial support, and so on.

(287 pages, no charge, Universities and Nonprofit Institutions Studies Group, Editorial Office, Room L-602, NSF, 1800 G St. Nw., Washington, DC 20550; tel. 202/634-4673.)

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## Wyngaarden

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campuses feel deficient is in buildings for toxic-waste storage and disposal. The second is in animal facilities as the guidelines for the care of animals are continually raised in quality; that carries with it certain structural requirements. The third is for research. There are some campuses that would place renovation money as the greatest need, because of older space. Other campuses feel that new construction is badly needed. We discussed all of them with the Congress. I don't know whether the climate is such that much can be done about this just now, but at least the issue has been raised again.

*SGR. Politically, this doesn't look like a time to expect growth.*

Wyngaarden. That's right. But in some areas we have been able to make progress. There was, and continues to be, a shortfall of instrumentation. A study some years ago put the shortfall for NIH-supported programs at about \$100 million. The plan we worked out was \$20 million a year for five years, and we're pretty well on target with that. The AIDS area is another example of limited increments in funding for certain fields. There have been some additions in the area of aging, particularly in the neurosciences, in the areas of dementias, in

particular Alzheimer's. So, we've been able to launch some new programs, not of immense size, but we've funded five new Alzheimer's centers this year, at about \$750,000 each.

*SGR. The level of NIH's international activities has declined a great deal in recent years. Where does it stand now?*

Wyngaarden. Over the past decade or so, about one-and-a-half percent of NIH activities have been in international programs. About half of that has been in research grants to foreign scientists for projects of unusual merit, or there's something very special about them. The other half is in training. We have over 1000 foreign scientists in various positions. That's without any allocation of money to foreign programs. The only budget that we have for international programs is the Fogarty International Center, and that's about \$10 million, most of it for bringing scientists to this country for training, research, and conferences.

*SGR. Is there anything to prevent an increase in foreign activities?*

Wyngaarden. No, there really isn't. We get a certain amount of complaints from American scientists who hear that we're funding work out of the country when it's so competitive here. But I think that's easily defended.

## Number of US Doctors Rises Again, AMA Reports

While the health-policy planners go into their second decade of insisting it can't go on like this, the number of physicians in the US went up again last year, according to figures issued this week by the American Medical Association.

From 1982 to 1983, the number actually engaged in patient care rose 3.6 percent, from 408,663 to 423,310, while the grand total went up from 501,958 to 519,403. Overall, the medical ranks have grown by 11 percent since 1980, with women constituting the fastest-growing group, up by 28 percent. Thirty-two percent of all entering students last year were women.

The AMA also reported substantial growth in the number of doctors in non-patient-care activities, mainly teaching, administration, and research. Between 1982 and 1983, their numbers rose from 40,726 to 44,286, an increase of 8.7 percent.

Among specialty choices, internal medicine remains the most popular, with 82,624, the AMA reported. Other fields: General surgery, 36,446; family practice, 35,977; pediatrics, 32,797; psychiatry, 30,803; obstetrics-gynecology, 29,332; general practice, 28,595; anesthesiology, 19,450; orthopedic surgery, 15,911; pathology, 14,892.

The long-predicted decline in medical school enrollments may have started but the rate of change is minuscule. The record-high first-year enrollment of 17,320 in 1982 was followed last year by a decline of 90.

### In Print: NAS Journal

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*Issues in Science and Technology*, limp debut of the long-planned, million-dollar quarterly sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences and its various subsidiaries; much of the content emits the telltale aroma of freshened-up or warmed-over material, such as Presidential Science Adviser George Keyworth peddling his Star Wars defense; and then there's dubious anguish, such as pollster Daniel Yankelovich's over "the absence of an effective scientific presence in the public debate on which successful democracy in our age depends"—which, warns Editor Allen H. Hammond, "can mean dangerously impoverished policy." Academy President Frank Press takes top place in the non-sequitur category: "Because our institutions lie at the intersection of national and international discussions of science, technology, and health policy, *Issues* has behind it resources no other institution can offer." Clear the intersection!

(\$24 per year, NAS, Room JH 726, 2101 Constitution Ave. Nw., Washington, DC 20418.)

### OSTP Plans Security Panel

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy says it will appoint a panel of 18 university and industry representatives to provide advice on rewriting the provisions of the Export Administration regulations that concern scientific information.

OSTP's advice will be fed to the trade-promoting Department of Commerce, which has lately been gaining ground in its long-running contention with the Defense Department over high-tech trade.

After several years of infighting over rules concerning academic science, OSTP Director George A. Keyworth has been expressing confidence that the nasties have been beaten and that academe can rest easy.

### Presidential Science Advice Subject of New Study

A study of relations between US presidents and their science advisers is being underwritten by the Twentieth Century Fund, a New York-based foundation that has recently taken an interest in science-policy issues.

The study, starting with FDR, will be conducted by Gregg Herken, Associate Professor of History, at Yale. An announcement from the Fund says a book-length manuscript is due in 1986.

Two earlier projects in the Fund's science-policy program have resulted in recent publications: *Science in the Streets*, which focuses on public perceptions of risk, and *The Science Business*, which looks at financial relations between universities and industry. The Fund is at 41 East 70th St. New York, NY, 10021; tel. 212/535/4441.

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## State Dept. Negative on NIH Head Visiting USSR

The Soviet Academy of Sciences and Ministry of Health have renewed an invitation for NIH Director James B. Wyngaarden to visit the Soviet Union. But State Department sources tell SGR that approval of the trip is "not likely, at least this fall."

They linked refusal, at least in part, to the plight of Andrei Sakharov's wife, who has been refused permission to leave the USSR for treatment of a heart ailment. "With that going on," a Department official commented privately, "the time is not appropriate for a visit on health matters." The State Department is the gatekeeper on scientific, health-related, and cultural contacts between US officials and the Soviets.

The invitation was verbally delivered to Wyngaarden at NIH earlier this month by a representative of the Soviet Embassy. It was apparently inspired by some uncharacteristically friendly words for east-west ties that President Reagan made June 27 in an informal talk to a conference sponsored by the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies. Meeting with the conferees at the White House, the President said, "Certainly nothing is more worthy of our attention than finding ways to reach out and establish better communication with the people and the government of the Soviet Union." Health and space were among the topics he specifically mentioned.

Wyngaarden, who has never been to the Soviet Union, was scheduled to visit Moscow last year in return for an earlier visit to the US by senior Soviet health officials. But his trip was canceled immediate-

ly following the Korean airliner episode. The renewed invitation was not tied to particular dates.

## NSF Picks Engineering Head

The leisurely pace of recruitment for senior executives at the National Science Foundation has produced a candidate to fill the year-long vacancy of Assistant Director for Engineering. The nominee, announced last month by the White House, is Nam Pyo Suh, Professor of Mechanical Engineering at MIT. He is also Director of MIT's Laboratory for Manufacturing and Productivity and head of the MIT-Industry Polymer Processing Program.

Suh, a native of Korea, immigrated to the US in 1954. He holds undergraduate and master degrees from MIT and a PhD from Carnegie-Mellon University.

Still to be appointed in the upper levels of NSF are assistant directors for Mathematical and Physical Sciences and for Astronomical, Atmospheric, Earth, and Ocean Sciences. NSF's number two post, Deputy Director, vacant for nearly two years, was to be filled by Erich Bloch, of IBM. But when Director Edward A. Knapp suddenly announced his resignation last spring, the White House appointed Bloch to be Director. Pending appointments by the White House, or, in some cases, by the NSF Director, all the posts have been filled on an acting basis by veteran members of the NSF staff.

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